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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HAVANA 009060

SIPDIS

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STATE DEPT FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2016

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: ROQUE ROUGHED UP, BLOCKED FROM ATTENDING USG EVENT

HAVANA 00009060 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: COM Michael Parmly for Reason 1.4(d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Leading Cuban pro-democracy activist Marta Beatriz Roque was recovering on April 26 after being roughed up by Communist militants who prevented her from leaving her neighborhood to attend a USG-organized event. Roque was not alone in being blocked; Elsa Morejon, the wife of political prisoner Oscar Biscet, was turned back while en route to the event, and Cuban authorities prevented independent journalist Roberto Santana from attending. Dissident Felix Bonne attended the event but returned home to find a militant mob awaiting him. He said they threatened him but did not assault him. There are indications that at least one other invitee had been unable to attend the event. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Marta Beatriz Roque of the Assembly to Promote Civil Society told Poloff April 26 that she had been pushed, punched and otherwise mistreated the previous evening, as she left her home to attend a USINT-organized videoconference at the COMR, on privatization. Showing redness on her cheek and elbow, and a bruise on her arm, Roque said the trouble started at 1745 when she exited her housing complex and was confronted by Communist militants. She said a female neighbor approached and told her, "You're not leaving today," and shoved her in the chest. Roque said she tried to make her way around a wall of eight or nine men, but that they pushed her to the ground. Roque said she stood up but was then punched in the stomach by a stocky male neighbor. Roque said she then headed back toward her home, repeatedly yelling, "Down With Fidel!" The female neighbor slapped Roque in the face, and a man who Roque believes was a State Security agent approached and warned that if she kept it up, he'd "haul her away." Roque was then inside her home, yelling through the open doorway, at which point the man took a step inside and punched Roque in the cheek. Roque, appearing shaken, told us she planned to seek medical attention, and complained of vision trouble. (Note: USINT took several photos of Roque on April 26. End note.)

ACRIMONIOUS MESSAGE  
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¶3. (SBU) Roque also showed Poloff a message the militants slipped under her door, written on the back of a poster featuring Hitler, Posada Carilles and President Bush. The militants wrote: "Nobody believes your lies; everyone knows you've sold out to the Yanks." They addressed one line to the COM: "Sergeant Parmly, I need a small donation of 50 million USD for the Conference of the Plumbers, I mean, Independent Librarians." The authors went on to say to Roque: "Your (U.S.) Government is without medical attention

for 140 million American citizens, and without primary education for 50 million children ... You and your Sergeant have no right to talk about democracy."

OTHER DISSIDENTS BLOCKED

14. (C) Roque was not alone in being prevented from attending the videoconference. Elsa Morejon, wife of celebrated political prisoner Oscar Biscet, was en route to the COMR when she was forced to head home. Morejon told Poloff that as she started the second leg of a two-taxi trip to the COMR, she was shoved inside the taxi and suddenly flanked by two other people, who told her she was not going anywhere. One of the two assailants then allegedly told the taxi driver that they were State Security officials, and ordered him to head to Acosta Street No. 464 in Lawton - Morejon's address. Morejon arrived home unscathed. Meanwhile, independent journalist Roberto Santana told us he was blocked from attending the videoconference, having been warned by officials of State Security, the Communist Party and the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution. Another dissident who was able to attend the event, Felix Bonne, told us he returned home to find a militant mob waiting for him. Bonne said the militants did not touch him but threatened he'd be "dragged" if he kept up his counter-revolutionary activity.

COMMENT

15. (C) It is unclear whether it was our videoconference that provided the impetus for the GOC action, or whether the GOC simply used the occasion to try to deliver another blow to the opposition. We'll talk to more invitees and try to get a better sense of who else might have been blocked. Roque, for her part, is in poor spirits, and understandably so. We will stay in close contact with her.

HAVANA 00009060 002.2 OF 002

PARMLY